

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A device that carries out a plurality of functions or services according to a plurality of settings, and has a help function, comprising:

a first memory storing addresses of a plurality of help lists, each help list corresponding to some service or function among said services or functions, the help list indicating values of said settings correctly applicable when the service or function is executed;

a second memory storing the help lists at the addresses given in the first memory;

a reference unit for using information related to unexecuted operations to find an address, in the first memory, of a help list applicable to one of the functions or services that was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly; and

a memory reading unit for reading the help list from the second memory at the address found by the reference unit.

2. The device of claim 1, further comprising:

a first display unit for displaying a prompt to alter at least one setting among said settings when the memory reading unit reads said help list.

3. The device of claim 2, further comprising a second display unit for displaying the help list read by the memory reading unit.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein the second display unit prints the help list read by the memory reading unit.

5. A device that carries out a plurality of functions or services according to a plurality of settings, and has a help function, comprising:

a first memory storing addresses of a plurality of help lists, each help list corresponding to some service or function among said services or functions, the help list indicating values of said settings correctly applicable when the service or function is executed;

a second memory storing the help lists at the addresses given in the first memory;

a reference unit for determining which function or service was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly, and finding an address, in the first memory, of a help list applicable to said function or service that was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly; and

a memory reading unit for reading the help list from the second memory at the address found by the reference unit.

6. The device of claim 5, further comprising:

an input unit for input of information by a user; and

a modifying unit for modifying said settings according to the information input by the user, thereby changing said settings to settings that will make the device operate normally.

7. The device of claim 5, further comprising a display unit for displaying the help list read by the memory reading unit.

8. The device of claim 7, wherein the display unit prints the help list read by the memory reading unit.

9. A device that carries out a plurality of functions or services according to a plurality of settings, and has a help function, comprising:

- a setting memory storing the settings used when each one of said functions or services is performed;

- a searching unit for determining which function or service was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly, and finding the settings, in the setting memory, corresponding to said function or service that was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly;

and

- a prompting unit for prompting a modification of the settings found by the searching unit.

10. The device of claim 9, further comprising:

- an input unit for input of information by a user; and

- a modifying unit for modifying said settings according to the information input by the user, thereby changing said settings to settings that will make the device operate normally.

11. A device that carries out a plurality of functions or services according to a plurality of settings, and has a help function, comprising:

- an input unit through which a user inputs information needed for operating the device;

- a cumulative memory for storing the information input through the input unit, in order of input;

- a first memory storing addresses of a plurality of help lists, each help list corresponding to a transition of operations of one of said services or functions, the help list indicating values of said settings correctly applicable when the service or function is executed;

a second memory storing the help lists at the addresses given in the first memory;

a reference unit for determining a transition of operations of a function or service that was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly, and finding an address, in the first memory, of a help list applicable to said function or service that was being attempted when the device failed to operate correctly; and

a memory reading unit for reading the help list from the second memory at the address found by the reference unit.

12. The device of claim 11, further comprising:

a modifying unit for modifying said settings according to the information input by the user, thereby changing said settings to settings that will make the device operate normally.

13. The device of claim 12, further comprising:

an operation control unit for operating the device again according to the information stored in the cumulative memory after the settings have been modified by the modifying unit.

14. The device of claim 11, further comprising a display unit for displaying the help list read by the memory reading unit.

15. The device of claim 14, wherein the display unit prints the help list read by the memory reading unit.

16. A device that carries out a plurality of functions or services according to a plurality of settings, and has a help function, comprising:

an input unit through which a user inputs information needed for operating the device;

a supervisory unit for outputting an error code when the device fails to operate correctly, the error code indicating the reason why the device failed to operate correctly;

a first memory storing addresses of a plurality of help lists, each help list corresponding to one of said services or functions or to one said error code, the help list indicating values of said settings correctly applicable when the service or function is executed;

a second memory storing the help lists at the addresses given in the first memory;

a reference unit for receiving the error code output by the supervisory unit and finding an address, in the first memory, of a help list corresponding to the error code; and

a memory reading unit for reading the help list from the second memory at the address found by the reference unit.

17. The device of claim 16, further comprising:

a modifying unit for modifying said settings according to the information input by the user, thereby changing said settings to settings that will make the device operate normally.

18. The device of claim 16, further comprising a display unit for displaying the help list read by the memory reading unit.

19. The device of claim 18, wherein the display unit prints the help list read by the memory reading unit.